



Rep. Kevin A. Elsenheimer  
1389 House Office Building  
Lansing, MI 48909

May 16, 2005

Re: Letter of Support for HB 4398 (Zoning Codification and Enabling)

The Michigan Environmental Council is strongly in support of House Bill 4398, and the state's continued effort to encourage better coordination in land use planning by consolidating the four separate zoning acts. Planning across jurisdictional boundaries ensures that a community's costly investments in road and sewer infrastructure, permanent conversions of land resources, and transportation planning and school placement complement rather than contradict plans made by neighboring governments.

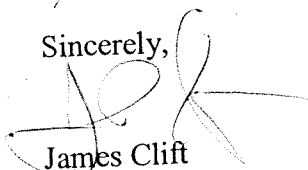
Currently Michigan has 1800 local units of government with planning and zoning authority. Under current law, counties, townships, and cities are each required to use different planning procedures, so working together means translating ideas into three separate ordinances, each with unique language and regulations—a costly and painstaking effort to translate these intentions between the various requirements of the four separate zoning acts and three different planning acts.

The Michigan Environmental Council, working with a diverse coalition of local residents and members of the land use community, has been working to improve coordination among local planning agencies for several years. The proposed unified zoning enabling act would allow for communities to make consistent and predictable land use decisions.

Coordination can help communities better protect regional resources, like jobs, watersheds and farmland, and better achieve desired growth, development and natural resource protection. This legislation also reflects the recommendation of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council to “unify and modernize Michigan’s four separate zoning acts” (Chapter 6, Section 17).

Thank you for your time and effort on this issue.

Sincerely,



James Clift

